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The Print Collector.

"L'ART" AND ITS ETCHINGS.

AMONG the usual profusion of etchings in a quarterly part of "L'Art," there are in the latest volume, which we have received from Mr. J. W. Bouton, the New York agent, two or three of extraordinary merit, each of which is well worth the price of the whole book. One of these is the brilliant rendering by Waltner of Troyon's "L'Abreuvoir." There are two cows at a drinking-trough, some chickens in the foreground, and a dog in the middle-distance. These simple elements make up the picture. But what power, consummate knowledge, and technical skill are shown in the rendering! Waltner used to be a steel engraver, which one would hardly suppose, judging from the unusual freedom and breadth of execution characteristic of his work as an etcher. He has been on the staff of "L'Art" for a long time; but it appears that he will be so no more; for the editor angrily complains that he does not fulfil his engagements. Waltner, he says, was to have etched for "L'Art" the chefs d'œuvres of Mr. Jules van Praet's entire collection of paintings, and he has done only this one. The reason assigned for this alleged neglect is that he is using his talents now only for money, and not for art, which apparently means that he finds he can do better for himself pecuniarily by working for English publications than by working for "L'Art." However this may be, our contemporary, we think, shows rather bad taste in losing its temper in the matter, which is one more of personal than of public interest. Mr. Waltner, whether he employs his needle for England or for France, is without doubt one of the most accomplished etchers of the day.

Chauvel, who works in much the same style as Waltner, and is almost as strong, gives us an interesting Troyon—quite out of that master's usual vein—a wonderful moonlight effect at sea. The original picture was painted by Troyon upon a window-shutter at the house of his friend, Alphonse Karr, at Sainte Adresse, near Havre. Chauvel is a "peintre-graveur," and in addition to his Troyon, gives a landscape of his own, notable particularly for its marvellously beautiful cloud forms.

Gaucherel gives an excellent etching after the painting, "Bibliothèque de Subiaco," by the eccentric Austrian Ethofer, one of whose fancies is to wear the garb of a Capucine monk. The picture shows two priests examining ancient manuscripts. Both figures are powerfully drawn.

The ducal palace at Venice, by J. R. P. Litoux, is good in color, and is interesting from an architectural point of view.

Much better is an etching by Lucien Gautier, representing an arm of the Seine in midwinter. The river is full of floating ice, and navigation is being accomplished with evident difficulty. Intimate knowledge of the effects of the different baths to be used in such an etching is shown here. Note the comparative strength of the barge in the foreground, the house on the quay, the bridge in the middle distance, and the public buildings in the extreme distance, and observe, too, the nice distinction always maintained between the strength of the trees in their relation with adjacent objects in various parts of the picture. The perspective is admirable. It may interest young etchers who will look admiringly upon this carefully prepared work to know something about Mr. Gautier. He is quite a young man, who began life as a photographer, failed in business, and is now a clerk in a merchant's office. His etching is all done in his spare hours at night.

Other etchings of the volume are "The Janissary,"

spiritedly executed by Edmund Ramus after a pen-and-ink drawing by Antonio Fabres; "Paris at Night," seen from the Pont des Saints-Pères, the skilful work of Charles E. Wilson—wonderful in perspective—after a painting by Léon Herpin, a young artist of rare promise who has died since this etching appeared; and an admirable work by J. Park, an English "peintre-graveur," both strong and original.

The other etchings of the volume are "The Fiddler," by William Rohn, after Teniers' painting in the Munich Pinacothèque, and "The Halt," by Gaujean, after the painting by Van Ostade.

The letter-press of the volume is more than usually interesting, its special feature being a fully illustrated account of the life and works of the late Alfred Stevens, who as painter, sculptor, and architect deserves to rank as one of the great Englishmen of the century.

PAOLO TOSCHI AND CORREGGIO'S FRESCOS.

THE last of the great Italian engravers was Paolo Toschi, who was born in Parma in 1788, and died there in 1858. Though not directly a pupil of Longhi, he was a disciple of the same school, having studied his art in Paris under Bervic, the brilliant pupil of old Wille. Toschi was a notable instance of a man who, having discovered what his forte is, steadily follows it, and so achieves the greatest success of which he is capable. Had he remained in Paris, and continued to reproduce subjects similar to those which had already been so brilliantly engraved by Wille and Bervic, he would prob-

"stew of frogs' legs." About the year 1840 Toschi obtained from the Grand Duchess of Parma a commission to engrave those matchless old frescoes which long had been, and which still are, the great attraction of Parma. He was appointed director of the Academy of Fine Arts, where he founded a school of engravers to assist him in his great undertaking. Of these engravers Raimondi and Dalco are the best known; but Toschi's personality and influence were so strong that it is not easy to discover any difference of style between his own work and that of his pupils. To the latter were assigned the engraving of the subordinate parts, while Toschi himself engraved the figures, and in some cases the entire plates.

He commenced his undertaking by making drawings of reduced size from the original frescoes. This was no easy task; for Correggio's work was sadly defaced by time. Nearly all these drawings by Toschi are now preserved in the museum of Parma, and they show him to have been a draughtsman of consummate ability. He has succeeded admirably in catching the sweet and graceful style of Correggio. One of these beautiful drawings has found its way to New York. It was presented to Mr. F. Keppel by Toschi's grandson, and is at present on exhibition at Mr. Keppel's store in this city. This drawing is from one of the frescoes in the Convent of San Paolo; it represents two beautiful children playing with emblems of the chase.

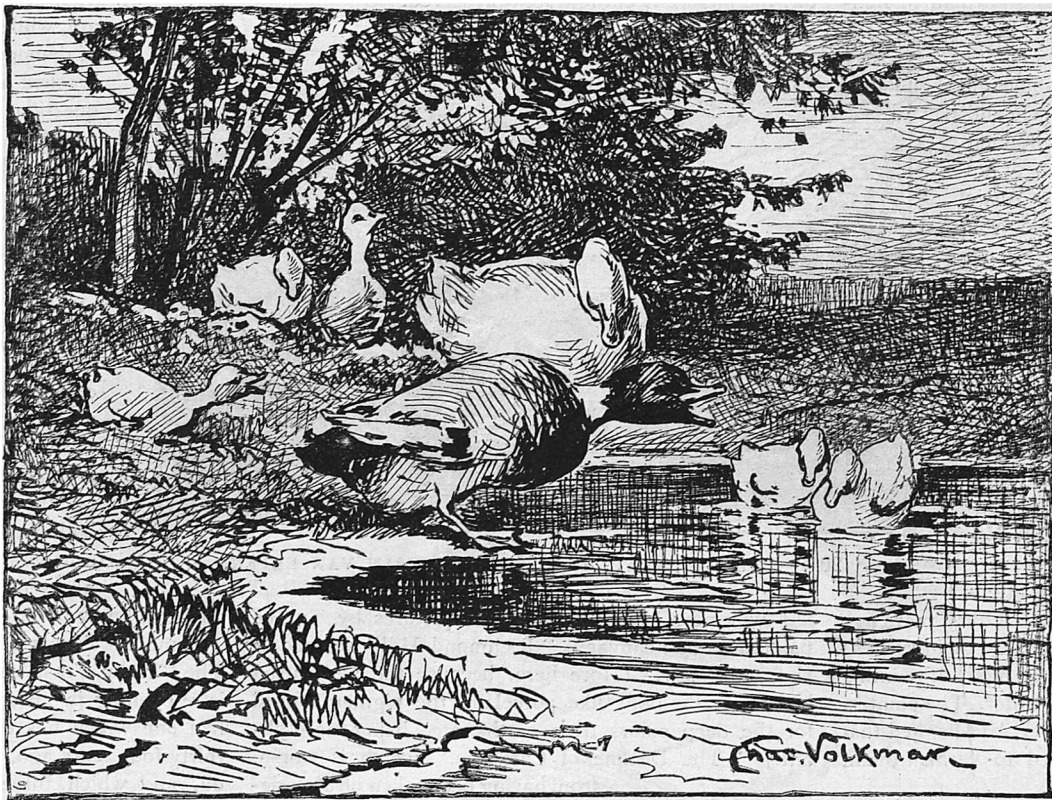
Toschi's prospectus of the proposed publication of engravings after Correggio's frescoes was issued in Parma on the 15th of April, 1844. At that date, however, much of the work had already been done. The

engravings were to be delivered to subscribers at intervals as completed. Proofs before letters were charged for at double the price of ordinary print, and there was a special issue (limited to thirty) of still earlier proofs at triple the price. Each of these first proofs bore a little engraved sketch or "remarque," in the margin. These "remarque" proofs are now in great request among connoisseurs. An instance of their increase in value may be cited. There is in the collection of James L. Claghorn, Esq., of Philadelphia, a "remarque" proof of the lovely "Madonna della Scala" which the owner values at five hundred dollars, and which certainly could not be duplicated for a less sum. But Toschi sold those proofs for twenty-four dollars!

How many stories could be told of the vicissitudes in price of some great works of art? It is said in London that bundles of first proofs of Turner's precious Liber Studiorum prints were used to kindle kitchen

fires; and it is affirmed by Toschi's family that after his death in 1858, his daughter, who was his sole heir, offered all the proofs of his engravings to the Calco-grafia Camerale (the Papal Government's publishing house) at ten francs each; but the sagacious directors would not pay more than five francs, just one dollar! Fortunately she in turn refused this munificent offer, and so these precious engravings remained in the possession of the family. Many—perhaps most—of the original impressions of Toschi's prints are now owned in our own country. Some fifteen years ago there was an absolute rage for collecting them in Boston. The priced catalogues of the auction house of Leonard & Co. show that the bids of competing collectors ran up the prices to very high figures. Their beautiful decorative character makes them peculiarly appropriate for rendering "the house beautiful."

It was thus that Paolo Toschi devoted his life to one worthy purpose. The greater part of the frescoes were engraved during his lifetime; some plates he left unfinished at the time of his death, and a few had not even been commenced. These last have since been engraved under his successor Raimondi; but we miss in them the magic touch of Toschi's own hand.



"A HAPPY FAMILY." DRAWN BY CHARLES VOLKMAR, AFTER HIS WATER-COLOR.

ably have taken a place in the history of the art as an engraver possessed of very respectable abilities, but as being not more remarkable than were several of his contemporaries, such as Richomme or Massard.

But returning to his native place—the old grand ducal city of Parma—he was fired with the desire to engrave the lovely frescoes which Correggio had painted there three centuries before, but which time was rapidly causing to disappear.

Correggio's magnificent work in the cupola of the cathedral was finished in 1530, and soon afterward the divinely gifted master died. It is recorded that soon after his death his great contemporary Titian journeyed from Venice to Parma to see those frescoes, and that while viewing the "Assumption" in the cupola of the cathedral, a joke was repeated to him which had been made by one of the younger canons. This pert young priest, having observed the free and graceful display of the limbs of the multitude of angels who are represented soaring heavenward with the Madonna, had called the picture "un ragoût de grenouilles." But when this was repeated to Titian, that great master declared that if the huge dome could be reversed and filled with gold it would contain nothing so precious as that same